

4 Ch

21

# PASTORAL LETTER

Promulgating the third Council of the Ecclesiastical Province  
of Quebec.

CHARLES-FRANCOIS BAILLARGEON,

By the Mercy of God and the Grace of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of  
Tioa, Assistant at the Pontifical Throne, Administrator of the  
Archdiocese of Quebec, &c., &c., &c.

*To the secular and regular Clergy, to the Religious Communities,  
and to all the Faithful of this Diocese, Health and  
Benediction in Our Lord.*

We feel happy, Dearly Beloved Brethren, in being able at last to publish  
our third provincial Council.

This is an event which you have long wished for, no doubt. Our desire to  
publish this Council sooner was no less earnest.

But we had first to fulfil a grave duty. Pastors with respect to the people,  
the Bishops are but the sheep of the flock with regard to the Successor of Peter.  
"Though they have been placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God"  
(Acts, 20, 28), they are nevertheless subject to him, whom Jesus Christ has  
appointed his Vicar upon earth, and to whom, in the person of the Prince of  
the Apostles, He has said: "Feed my sheep" (John, 21, 17). And this  
religious submission which we owe to the Supreme Head of the Church, whom  
the Saviour of the world has commissioned "to confirm his brethren"  
(Luke, 22, 32), imposed upon us the obligation of laying the acts of our Council  
at his feet, and of awaiting his approbation before promulgating them.

The decree which contains this approbation concerns you, D. B. B., as much  
as it does ourselves, and therefore, being persuaded that you will be happy to  
know it, we make it our pleasing duty to communicate it to you.

The purport of that document is that the S. Congregation of the Propaganda,  
in its meeting of the 22nd of May last, after a careful examination of the decrees

of the third provincial Council of Quebec, pronounced them worthy of approbation ; and that the Secretary of the said Congregation, having laid this judgment before Our Holy Father the Pope, in his audience of the 28th of the same month, His Holiness was pleased to confirm it, and further to order the said decrees to be promulgated and observed throughout this Province.

Upon receiving this high approbation of the decrees of our Council, we understood that not only were we allowed to publish them, but that it was our duty to do so without delay. Accordingly we hastened to have them printed ; and we are now enabled to promulgate them, according to the command of the Holy Father, and such is in fact the object of this pastoral letter.

Therefore, from the date of the publication of this pastoral, the decrees of the third Council of the Province of Quebec shall be considered as duly promulgated in this Archdiocese ; and consequently they shall be to you as so many salutary instructions and holy laws, emanated from your chief pastors, and endowed with the sanction of the Supreme Head of the Church. We therefore confidently hope that your piety will induce you to receive them with all the reverence due to so high an authority, and that you will make it your duty to keep them, as dutiful children obey the precepts of their father.

We shall only add here a few words to direct your attention to the most important of those decrees, which are the fourth, sixth, seventh, tenth, eleventh and twelfth.

By the fourth, the Bishops wished to renew and confirm all the decrees of the first two Councils, in order thereby to maintain them in all their vigor, and to oppose the deplorable propensity of most men to forget and neglect the wisest laws and the most sacred rules.

The sixth, which is comparatively lengthy, treats of the dignity, of the authority, and of the duties of Bishops. In the two former Councils, the Bishops had reminded the priests, the parish priests, and all ecclesiastics in general, of the peculiar virtues of their holy state, and of the obligations of their sacred ministry. In this, they considered it their duty to draw up as it were a compendious synopsis of the duties of their own awful and sublime office. This they have done in the sixth decree, both for their own and for your edification. For they wished, by the consideration of those duties, first to excite themselves to fulfil them worthily, and moreover to induce you to honor their dignity, to acknowledge their authority, and frequently to pray for them, that they may correspond to their holy vocation, and approve themselves in all things faithful ministers of Jesus-Christ for the salvation of your souls and the greater glory of God.

The seventh, extends to all the Dioceses of this Province, without exception, the ancient rule which circumscribes the limits of the jurisdiction of parish priests in this Archdiocese: so that, henceforward, by virtue of this decree, every parish priest of this Province shall be authorized to preach and to hear confessions in those parishes, even of another diocese than his own, of which the nearest habitations are not more than nine miles distant from the limits of the parish committed to his care.

In the tenth, the fathers of the Council, heedful of the exhortations of the Sovereign Pontiff, raise their voice against that host of errors and heresies which, in this age of unbelief, the agents of hell continually invent, and which they leave no means untried to propagate among men, to the misery of nations, and the ruin of souls. In order to oppose them with greater force and better success, they invoke the supreme authority of the Holy Father, and ordain that to the present decree be joined his two important allocutions (those of 1854 Dec. 9 and 1862 June 9), in which he points out to the christian world, proscribes and condemns all those monstrous errors.

The eleventh, cheerfully do we believe it, D. B. B., will find a loud echo in your catholic hearts. It contains a warm protestation of respect and love for, and attachment to the Sovereign Pontiff, the glorious Pius IX, made in the name of the Bishops, the Clergy, and all the Faithful of this Province, and accompanied with a solemn act of adhesion to the celebrated declaration of the Bishops, gathered in Rome in 1862 for the canonization of the Holy Martyrs of Japan, concerning the temporal rights of the Holy See: which declaration is but the faithful expression of the sentiments of the Bishops, the Clergy, and all true Catholics throughout the world.

This decree, we feel convinced of it, will receive your hearty approbation, and you are prepared to subscribe to it with joy. In these unhappy days, when Hell and the world seem to have formed a league, to wage a relentless war against the Head of the Church, it is glorious for the children of that Church, to proclaim in the face of the world their filial respect and tender love for the Holy Pontiff, and their inviolable attachment to his sacred person; it is desirable and of the utmost importance that all Catholics should raise their voice together to defend him and to safeguard his rights; it is their duty, in fine, and a source of happiness to them, to gather round his throne, in order thus to remain more closely united to him and to each other, and thereby to be enabled to protect him more efficaciously against the aggressions of his enemies.

Lastly, the twelfth decree of our Council relates to our noble Laval University.

In this truly remarkable decree, the Bishops show us in the first place, that the fathers of the first provincial Council, considering the great services which a catholic university can render to letters, to society, and to religion, had pledged themselves to do all in their power to procure to the catholics of this country the advantage of having their own universities, as well as their own colleges and schools.

They acknowledge in the second place, that it is at the reiterated request of the same Bishops also, that the Seminary of Quebec, at the price of immense sacrifices, has founded the Laval University. They next declare that they approve the Statutes of that University, and offer up fervent prayers for its increase and prosperity : which abundantly proves that it answers their expectation perfectly, and that it is their fond wish those catholic young men should flock thither, who intend to fit themselves for the liberal professions, by the study of the higher branches of learning.

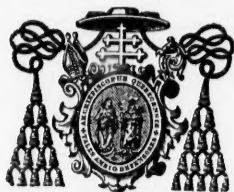
In fine, considering that the number of students at the Laval University is far smaller than what it ought to be, and, no doubt, grieving to see that too many of our catholic young men persist in going to protestant colleges and universities, to the imminent peril of their faith and morals ; the fathers of our Council solemnly warn all the faithful of this Province, to watch over the salvation of those intrusted to their care : beseeching them in the name of the Lord, to provide first of all for the preservation of their faith and morals ; and, to this end, not to allow them to draw the waters of science but from the purest spring.

Let us hope therefore that all catholic fathers and mothers, who have the salvation of their children at heart, will comprehend these grave admonitions of their chief pastors, and that they will profit by them, for the honor of our Religion and the greater glory of God.

Such are in substance, D. B. B., the principal decrees of our third provincial Council, which we this day publish. Such is in short the result of the labors of the Bishops of the Province in their last reunion : labors undertaken for the interest of your salvation, and which they concluded with a fervent prayer addressed to Mary conceived without sin, the mother of God ; beseeching her, as the patroness of the Metropolis and of the whole Province, to take under her powerful protection their persons and their dioceses, your souls and theirs, and saying to her, with the whole Church of God : *Regina sine labe concepta, ora pro nobis.* Queen conceived without sin, pray for us.

This our pastoral letter shall be read in all the churches and parochial chapels, where divine service is publicly celebrated, and moreover in all the chapters of the religious communities, on the first Sunday after its reception.

Given at Quebec, under our hand and seal, and the counter-sign of our Secretary, on Ash-Wednesday, the fourteenth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and sixty six.



† C. F. BISHOP OF TLOA,

*Administrator.*

By His Lordship's command,

EDMOND LANGEVIN, Priest,

*Secretary.*